

Roger Harripersad
Hall of Fame Acceptance Remarks
May 2022

Thank you for the opportunity to reflect on a sport that provided me with such enjoyment and sense of accomplishment, I could not be more appreciative. Although I picked up a racquet in 1979, and hung it up one last time in 1999, my accomplishments were really from 1981 through to 1988. During this time the game was the most competitive in history, where we enjoyed the thought of the game becoming mainstream, to then feeling the heartbreak of the IRT folding in 1988. It's at that point some of us knew it was an end to our career and the future of racquetball as we dreamed it. Many of us left the game, either mentally or physically - Swain left to pursue tennis only to return somewhat motivated; I left to pursue full-time education while dabbling in the sport; and Harnett left the sport for good.

The will to be the best drew me back in 93 to try and be the best in the world one moment in time committing once again to a rigorous training regime. However, I made the decision to walk away from the game for good that year, or so I thought, as I humbly believed my best could not beat the best of the top three in the world.

For a period of time following my dabbling in the sport from 1989 - 1992, I fell into a space of feeling sorry for myself as much of my identity was wrapped up in this sport. I eventually realized I had nothing to feel sorry about as I recognized I was very fortunate to have played at a time where Hogan and Yellen were still going for their 5th and 6th overall National Championship. When Swain, who in my opinion is the greatest of all time was at the top of his game. When the World Championships looked like a mini draw from the professional tour, and Bud Muelhiesen and Carl Loveday were still coaching. These were great things to be a part of.

There are a couple of reasons that I am honored to be inducted into the Racquetball Canada Hall of Fame. The first is to share this achievement with great athletes like Sherman Greenfeld, Lyndsay Myers, Christie Van Hees and Heather McKay. Having my name mentioned with these accomplished and deserving athletes is an honor.

Second, and more importantly, it was more than just the titles I won, it was the recognition from my peers and students for what I gave back to the game. The letters I received during this nomination process and many others when I was the coach of the Alberta Junior Team means so much more to me. Brian and Tina Istace, Kris Odegard, Chris Brumwell, and Kelly Kerr all wrote touching letters on how my impact was beyond just the game of racquetball for them. Being on the National Team was a childhood dream for these young kids, and to watch their reactions when they were eventually announced as National Team members was priceless.

There are so many people to thank that helped me achieve my accomplishments during that period - my parents, who opened all the doors for me to be successful; my wife who supported me while I pursued a dream where failure meant one step from living in a tent in the middle of downtown Calgary; Cliff Hendrickson creating the "Cathedral of Racquetball", aka the Foothills Club, where I was able to learn my craft and form lasting friendships that are still intact today.

A special nod goes to Kelly Kerr who allowed me to bring closure to my amateur career. We won two National Doubles Titles leading up to a Silver Medal at the Pan American Games in 1999. This was 5yrs after I hung up the racquet in 1993, a bum shoulder, one working leg, three different brands of rackets, suspect draws, level 3 refs, many appeals, and that one lone fan that cheered for us both. That still to this day brings a smile to my face.

Thank you to Racquetball Canada, Sports Canada, IRT, CPRO, USRA for all that you have done for me, this sport has given me so much to be grateful for.

Roger Harripersad
Class of 2022

